



## News Release

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### **Due to The Economic Toll of Tobacco, Utah Families See Their Futures Go “Up in Smoke”**

(Salt Lake City, UT) – According to the U.S. Surgeon General, each year, the nationwide economic toll from smoking exceeds \$157 billion dollars – \$75 billion in direct medical costs and \$82 billion in lost productivity. Monday, May 31, is “World No Tobacco Day,” celebrated globally, and sponsored by the World Health Organization. This year’s theme is “Up in Smoke; Tobacco’s Cost to the Family.”

“The average cost to the four dollar pack-a-day smoker per year is \$1,460, and for the two-packs-a-day smoker it’s \$2,920,” said Lena Dibble, media liaison, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, Utah Department of Health. “This doesn’t even include the money smokers would save on health care.”

A two-pack-a-day smoker who quits can save almost \$15,000 over a five-year period, which would enable them to buy a car, home entertainment system, and other luxuries many people assume they cannot afford. The amount would increase with interest and investments.

“If a 25 year-old, two-pack-a-day smoker chose to put their tobacco money in the market instead, they could retire with more than one million dollars by age 65,” said Todd Berg, private client consultant with Charles Schwab and Company, Inc. “That amount is from the saved tobacco funds alone and doesn’t count regular income, and the money they will save on healthcare.”

The U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Richard H. Carmona, will release a nationwide report today called “The Health Consequences of Smoking.” The report reveals that the economic and health effects of

**- MORE -**

## **Page 2 of 2 - Due to the Economic Toll of Tobacco, Utah Families See Their Finances Go “Up in Smoke”**

smoking are more widespread than previously thought. The list of diseases that the Surgeon General has conclusively linked to smoking has grown. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), smoking has caused 12 million deaths since the first Surgeon General’s Report was released in 1964.

“Each pack of cigarettes sold in the United States costs the nation an estimated \$7.18 in medical costs and lost productivity,” said Dibble. “Because of this, tobacco-use prevention programs are among the most cost-effective of all health interventions.”

In Utah, the annual health care costs directly caused by smoking equal \$273 million. Residents’ state and federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures equals \$452 per household annually. Smoking-caused productivity losses equal \$244 million.

For more information on “World No Tobacco Day,” visit [www.wntd.com](http://www.wntd.com). For a detailed summary of the U.S. Surgeon General’s report and other related information, visit [www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco).

Sources:

*[MMWR – Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Economic Costs – United States, 1995-1999](#) 51(14) April 12, 2002*

*[Federal Trade Commission. Cigarette Report for 2001.](#) (PDF) Washington, DC: Federal Trade Commission; 2003. Accessed: February 2004.*

*CDC, State Highlights 2002, April 2002*

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.*